

Summary of the Membership and Outreach Committee Meeting February 5, 1997

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Membership and Outreach Committee met from 9:00 to 11:45 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, February 5, 1997. The meeting was led by Dr. Michael Volz, Chair, California Department of Health Services. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of Committee members present is given in Attachment B.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the meeting was to continue to review ways to increase participation in NELAC. The following items were discussed according to the prepared agenda:

- Letter to the governors,
- NELAC fact sheet,
- NELAC World Wide Web (WWW) page on the Internet, and
- Outreach topics.

LETTER TO THE GOVERNORS

Dr. Volz distributed a draft letter to be sent to the governor of each State concerning the State's designated NELAC representative. The letter asked for confirmation of who will be representing each State, requested funding for out-of-state travel for the representative to the conference, and encouraged the eight States that have not yet appointed a representative to do so.

The Committee suggested that copies of this letter be sent to each State's legislature. The Implementation Committee would then contact State legislators to work on adopting NELAC at the State level. The text of the letter should emphasize the importance and cost-effectiveness of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) for protecting the environment and the health of each State's citizens.

NELAC WEB PAGE

Ms. Karin Johnson of the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) demonstrated the current NELAC bulletin board/web site and a prototype world wide web (WWW) page developed by RTI. The present NELAC bulletin board/web site has a number of files that can be downloaded, but it can be difficult for new users. It was noted that the WWW page can easily be made more colorful and easier to use and can provide highly readable text and graphics through the Adobe Acrobat® system.

The Committee suggested that the NELAC fact sheet be added to the WWW page after the fact sheet has been completed. Other useful additions include the relationship between NELAC, NELAP, and the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB); timelines for NELAC implementation; and the latest copy of the draft guidelines under development by NELAC. The address of this WWW page should be included on all Committee correspondence. Support was expressed by the Committee to strive for greater accuracy, expanded scope, and timeliness in the WWW page's development.

NELAC FACT SHEET

The Committee suggested that the contribution of NELAC to the field of public health as well as to environmental protection should be emphasized throughout the NELAC fact sheet. Other suggestions included the following:

- Accreditation authority should be defined more clearly and should include the options available to the States. It should be noted that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) will not provide substitute standards for States which choose to not adopt the NELAC standards.
- Constituency groups should be expanded to include State regulators and the regulated industries. NELAP-accredited laboratories will be better able to advertise for business than nonaccredited laboratories. After implementation, all parties will have more and better information on which to base decisions.
- In the fact sheet, the phrase "approved methods" should be changed to "validated methods." This change was approved by the Committee.
- On page 4 of the fact sheet, the terms "ISO Guide 25," "ISO Guide 58," and "ISO Guide 43" should be changed to the proper name of the international guidelines, with the ISO number indicated parenthetically.

Dr. Volz asked that additional comments be sent to him as soon as possible.

OUTREACH TOPICS

Dr. Volz asked the Committee to suggest ways to increase awareness of and participation in NELAC. The Committee noted that the new WWW page constitutes outreach by making more people aware of the program and its potential benefits. Other suggestions included the following:

- Preparing a presentation package to facilitate presentations to legislative, trade, and professional associations at State and local meetings. A script, speakers list, and audiovisual (AV) material could be provided in the package.
- Preparing lists of potential speakers.

- Asking Committee members to volunteer to serve as speakers.
- Distributing the NELAC fact sheet to State environmental groups.
- Asking State representatives to form outreach networks within their States to disseminate information and make presentations. The State representative could also be asked to provide lists of contacts in the State.

The cost of WWW page development may be borne by the USEPA. Dr. Volz offered to have his office absorb the costs of the initial mailings. Funding will need to be arranged for preparation of the presentation package.

ACTION ITEMS
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Item No.	ACTION	Date Completed
1	Dr. Volz will revise the letter to the governors and the NELAC fact sheet. He will review his revised draft with Committee members and RTI personnel by conference call.	

LIST OF COMMITTEE/CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS
Membership and Outreach Committee Meeting
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